



FICEMS

Federal Interagency Committee on EMS

The Honorable Deborah A.P. Hersman
Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20594

Department of Defense

Office of the Assistant
Secretary of Defense for
Health Affairs

In reference to: A-09-102 and A-09-103

**Department of
Homeland Security**

Office of the Assistant
Secretary for Health
Affairs/Chief Medical Officer
U.S. Fire Administration

Dear Madam Chairman:

**Department of Health &
Human Services**

Office of the Assistant
Secretary for
Preparedness and Response
Indian Health Service
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
Health Resources and
Services Administration
Centers for Medicare &
Medicaid Services

As Chairman of the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS), I am writing to describe the progress that FICEMS has made in addressing the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) recommendations A-09-102 and A-09-103 relating to air medical transport of patients with emergency medical conditions. We appreciate the NTSB's focus on improving the safety of helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) and are working to address these recommendations.

**Department of
Transportation**

National Highway Traffic
Safety Administration

In December 2011, then FICEMS Chair, Dr. Alexander G. Garza, sent you a letter describing the efforts to date by FICEMS to address these two important recommendations. FICEMS is pleased to report the following progress on the recommendations since that time.

A-09-103

Develop national guidelines for the selection of appropriate emergency transportation modes for urgent care.

**Federal Communications
Commission**

Public Safety and
Homeland Security Bureau

FICEMS' previous update described the work initiated by project investigators with Children's National Medical Center (CNMC) under a Cooperative Agreement between CNMC and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) including an expert panel's development of the nation's first evidence-based EMS protocol for helicopter transport of severely injured patients and its subsequent review by the protocol review committee of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). The project investigators have now completed the HEMS evidence-based guideline development process and have drafted the enclosed manuscript describing their methodology and providing clear documentation for the guideline rationale. This manuscript, along with a sample prehospital transport protocol, will be submitted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal, *Academic Emergency Medicine*. This paper represents an important contribution to prehospital

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DRAFT FOR FICEMS CONSIDERATION

June 25, 2012

emergency care and will contribute to improved patient care and effective use of air ambulance services.

This effort may also serve as a template for the development of additional evidence-based transport guidelines, as FICEMS continues to explore options for developing guidelines for helicopter transport of patients suffering from other time-sensitive non-traumatic emergency conditions.

A-09-102

Develop national guidelines for the use and availability of helicopter emergency medical transport by regional, state, and local authorities during emergency medical response system planning.

FICEMS' previous update to the NTSB described work done as part of an interagency agreement between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NHTSA to create national guidelines for the use and availability of HEMS. Under this interagency agreement, the CDC convened an expert panel that included representatives from the following fields: State EMS Directors, State EMS Medical Directors, public health, trauma surgery, emergency medicine, prehospital emergency care, and air medical transportation. At their earlier meetings, the panel identified four key subject areas where guidelines were needed. The expert panel then formed working groups to review the scientific literature and relevant documents relating to each of these key topics. The findings of the working groups were presented to an invitational meeting of subject matter experts in air medical transport held in Atlanta on March 20, 2012. At this meeting, subject matter experts were invited to comment on the preliminary findings of the working groups and to submit written comments on the draft documents. The working groups subsequently revised their documents and developed final recommendations. These documents were then consolidated into a single report which is currently under review by the CDC.

FICEMS will continue to provide periodic updates to the NTSB as work continues with developing and evaluating HEMS guidelines for all emergencies. Based on the work to date, FICEMS would like to request an "Open – Acceptable Response" for recommendations A-09-102 and A-09-103.

If you have any questions regarding these updates, please contact Drew Dawson, Chair of the FICEMS Technical Working Group, at the NHTSA Office of Emergency Medical Services which provides administrative support to FICEMS. Drew can be reached at (202) 366-9966.

Sincerely,

David Strickland
Chair, Federal Interagency Committee on EMS
Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration